

WYCOMBE TOUR SUCCESS

ALTHOUGH Wycombe Wanderers were only able to arrange one friendly game in Italy last week, they arrived back in the early hours of yesterday morning (Monday) having completed a highly enjoyable seven-day stay.

In contrast to last year when they competed in the Anglo-Italian Inter-League Tournament, the emphasis on this latest tour was one of relaxation and there can be few better places for that than Rimini where we spent the week.

Originally, Wanderers were hoping to play friendlies on Tuesday and Thursday and when the tour arrangements were made, it was almost certain the two proposed opponents would be available.

However, both Riccione and Rimini were staging vital games on Sunday which decided whether

they would stay in Divisions 3 and 2 respectively. Also, the stand-by fixture against Cesena Under 21 had to be called off as the Italians had appointed a new manager only a few days previously and were in the process of reorganising.

Thanks to the considerable efforts of secretary John Goldsworthy, a match was eventually arranged against Rimini and although it was played under rather bizarre circumstances, it proved an excellent, afternoon's entertainment and provided many of the players with valuable experience.

Apart from the game itself, it was extremely interesting to visit the magnificent stadium in Rimini which would compare very favourably with many of our top Football League grounds. Fred

Badham, who visits most of the league clubs in his capacity of fund raiser for Oxford United and Wycombe, likened the stadium to Chelsea's Stamford Bridge. Fred replaced Wanderers vice-chairman Brian Lee, who was unable to tour due to business pressures.

FRIENDSHIPS

The Blues took seven guests on the trip — Ian Bath, Eddie Junger, Billy Salkeld, Geoff Anthony, Steve Voss, Neil Wheeldon and Derek Cotterell and all but Burnham goalkeeper Junger played in the match at some stage. I gather that Eddie, having seen the considerable skills of the Italians, wasn't complaining on missing out!

A tour always gives the chance of forming friendships and all the players got on well

together, even though there was an unusually high number of guests in the party. All of the players I spoke to were well pleased with the tour.

Rimini itself provided plenty of entertainment and also a chance to see the older parts of the town. The famous Rimini market gave us the chance to seek out bargains although I wasn't too flattered to be dubbed a 'Scots-Englishman' when haggling over the price of one item.

Fears that certain members of the party would be declared illegal immigrants at Gatwick on the return journey, were unfounded but committee man Bob Hart earned himself the nickname of 'Kunte-Kinte' from the television series *Roots* after coming back with the best sun tan in the 24-man party.

Actually, the weather was perfect for almost the whole week and there were certainly no complaints about the excellent hotel.

LOG SAWING!

Trainer Jock Sheppard was once again taken to task over his snoring, but Jock denied emphatically that the hairline cracks in his bedroom were caused by his now infamous 'log sawing'.

On the players front, it was revealed that Ian Pearson would be touring Finland with Millwall F.C. in July. Ian, who joined Wanderers last season after two years with Plymouth Argyle and scored 48 goals for the Blues, has told me he would love to return to the professional game but Wycombe will want considerable financial compensation.

No further plans for next season have been revealed although I expect few changes in the playing staff under manager John Rardon. Two players who will definitely be at Loakes Park are Bob Davies and John Priestley who signed contracts recently. Training, by the way, begins next month.